



MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE

on

STORMWIND RESERVOIR and WOODS PLACE RESERVOIR STOCKING

Region 4
4600 Giant Springs Road
Great Falls MT 59405
February 7, 2019

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks (FWP) proposes to stock fish in Stormwind Reservoir and Woods Place Reservoir. The reservoirs occur on public land and have not been stocked previously.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

FWP is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of its proposed actions to the human and physical environments. In compliance with FWP's MEPA Public Involvement Policy, two separate Environmental Assessments were prepared by FWP for the proposed projects and released on January 4, 2019 for public comment. The draft EA's were titled: *Stormwind Reservoir – Environmental Review of Fish Introduction* and *Wood Place Reservoir – Environmental Review of Fish Introduction*. The draft EA's were circulated to local sporting groups, local sporting goods stores, and were also posted and remain available for viewing on the FWP webpage at <http://fwp.mt.gov/home/publicComments.html>. The draft EA's evaluated the potential impacts of the following alternatives in addition to the proposed action:

Alternative A: No Action

If the No Action alternative were adopted, fish would not be stocked and thus, no additional recreational angling opportunity would be provided.

Summary of Public Comment and FWP Response

Given the similar nature of the two separate EA's and the limited public comment received, a single decision notice and summary is deemed appropriate.

Six comments were received during the public comment period, which ended on February 4, 2019. Four comments were made via email, one comment was received via

phone, and one comment was received in person. All comments were generally supportive of the proposed action. No new information, concerns, or objections arose from the comments that were not evaluated or within the scope of the draft EA's. Comment summaries and the Department's response are as follows:

Comment Summary 1

All commenters expressed support for stocking the proposed reservoirs and appreciated the additional angling opportunity.

Response: Thank you for your comments.

Comment Summary 2


Two commenters expressed concern regarding adequate forage and habitat as it relates to species stocked. Additionally, the commenters expressed a preference for which species to be stocked.

Response: The waterbodies have been evaluated for depth, dissolved oxygen, and forage (via plankton tows). Both reservoirs have been deemed suitable to likely support a fish population in most years. Periods of drought and low-water storage may induce winterkill conditions in some years. FWP provided a list of species that may be stocked at each waterbody. Final decision to stock a species will be dependent upon the suitability of the habitat provided by the waterbody. Plankton and forage fish species will be factors in determining the species to stock, in addition to thermal regime, bathymetry, and social factors such as ease of access, other recreational waters nearby, and angler preferences.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and FWP evaluation, it is my decision to proceed with the proposed stocking of fish in Stormwind and Woods Place Reservoirs.

I find there to be no significant impacts to the human and physical environments associated with this project. Public comments received during the comment period showed general support for the proposed action. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.



Gary Bertellotti
FWP Region 4 Supervisor